Department of LABOR AND INDUSTRIES

ERGONOMICS
Worker Protection

Ergonomics demonstration project: Trucking

Need

The trucking industry has a high rate of Work-Related Musculokeletal Disorders (WMSDs), with work that involves several risk factors, including heavy lifting. Ludtke Pacific Trucking is among one of the first 12 industries that need to comply with the ergonomics rule. Although the type of trucking that this employer engages in has ergonomic risk factors and hazards, it does not reflect the full range of hazards in the trucking industry, as Ludtke does not manually load/unload trucks. Overexertion for State Fund claims accounts for 30 percent of the injury types for the trucking industry, which resulted in $15.5 million in claims cost from 1996 to 2001. The high number of injuries in trucking has significant personal and financial cost to workers and employers.

Goals

The goals of the Ludtke Pacific Trucking Demonstration Project are to:

- Identify ergonomic risk factors and hazards covered by the ergonomics rule in the trucking industry.
- Identify best practices for the trucking industry to reduce or eliminate hazards to be in compliance with the rule.
- Provide examples of ergonomic risk factors, hazards and controls to use in Department of Labor and Industries training workshops for this industry.
- Identify controls to reduce lifting for shop mechanics changing brake drums.
- Assess effectiveness of using automatic pull tarp for reducing risk factors associated with tarping loads.
- Provide awareness education and training to shop mechanics that work in caution zone jobs.

Project design

The project team includes representatives from Ludtke Pacific Trucking and L&I staff. Ludtke Pacific Trucking volunteered to be a demonstration project as a result of an ergonomic consultation with L&I in March 2001.

Ludtke Pacific Trucking transports containers of materials loaded into dump trucks; thus, it does not include the manual loading of trucks. Maintaining trucks by shop mechanics is physically demanding and requires lifting up to 110 pounds. This can occur one to two times per shift for two to three days in a row, or once daily for a week. The team will work on identifying engineering solutions to alleviate the heavy lifting, and evaluate the spring-changing job for risk factors for shop mechanics. Another focus for the team will be to assess the effectiveness of using automatic pull tarp for reducing risk factors associated with tarping loads for truck drivers. The team will also ensure that employees working in caution zone jobs receive awareness education.

Timetable

August 2001.....Start
September 2001.....Complete project plan and assemble team
November 2001.....Completed site evaluation and brainstorm solutions
November 2001.....Assemble photos and video to be used for training
December 2001 .....Final report

Results

The project will result in three products the entire industry can use to help implement the ergonomics rule:

- Demonstrate that trucking employers can identify risk factors and hazards covered by the rule.
- Identify ways to reduce or eliminate hazards to be in compliance with the rule.
- Share information from the project with the industry by allowing information to be posted on the L&I ergonomic web site and/or included in an industry-specific ergonomic workshop.